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Why Should You Read This Pamphlet?

You will learn all about what Canada is doing to reduce the harm caused by problem drug use. Abuse of alcohol and other drugs affects most of us at some point in our lives. We may become victims of crime committed by drug users. Families suffer when loved ones abuse alcohol or drugs. We may become regular users of medicines intended for temporary relief of stress or illness. A large number of tax dollars go each year to combat the drug problem. One way or another, we all pay a price.



What Is a Drug?

A drug is any chemical substance, natural or synthetic, that affects the way the body or mind functions. Different types of drugs include the following:

- social drugs such as alcohol;
- street drugs such as cocaine, marijuana and heroin;
- medicinal drugs such as tranquillizers and sleeping pills;
- anabolic steroids; and
- products used as inhalants such as glue.

Why Do We Take Drugs?

Drug taking is as old as the human race. To deal more effectively with problem drug use, we must understand why people use drugs. We use drugs for a variety of reasons. We may want relief from the effects of illness. Unpleasant feelings such as stress, boredom, lack of self-confidence or loss of hope may cause us to turn to drugs. Some people try drugs out of curiosity or because they want to fit in.

It is not realistic to attempt to stop all drug use. We must instead deal with problem drug use and the harm it causes.



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Is There a Drug Problem in Canada?

Statistics tell us that Canada does have a drug problem. For example:

- Alcohol abuse is Canada's leading drug problem, followed by cannabis (marijuana and hash).
- 74% of secondary school youth under the legal drinking age use alcohol. 11% have four or more drinks at one sitting.
- 14% of school youth aged 15-19 used cannabis in 1989.
- 2% of the general population used cocaine in 1989.
- A major problem of drug abuse persists among teenagers and young adults who are school drop-outs, unemployed, or who have no permanent homes.
- There is a slight gradual decline in the use of most drugs. However, the drugs used today are stronger. Users combine alcohol with other drugs. People are finding new and more dangerous ways to take drugs.

What do these statistics mean? In human terms, they mean damage to health, problems in the workplace and classroom, family upheaval and much social misery. In terms of money, the statistics translate into millions spent on health care, family welfare services, unemployment benefits and disability pensions. Millions more are spent on drug law enforcement.

What Is Canada's Drug Strategy?

The Strategy aims to reduce the harm caused by alcohol and other drugs to individuals, families and communities. It is an effort by many partners to cooperate in dealing with Canada's drug problem. These partners include all levels of government, business, law enforcement agencies, and professional and voluntary organizations. The Minister of National Health and Welfare plays a leading role in the Strategy.

There is no simple solution to Canada's drug problem. Many programs are in place, both inside and outside of government. Communities, provinces and territories have been working hard for a long time to reduce the **demand** for drugs. They have put a lot of money into prevention, counselling and treatment programs. Many professional and volunteer groups have played an important role in helping people learn about drugs. They also help people to cope with problems caused by drugs.

Historically, the federal government has spent millions of dollars each year to stop the **supply** of drugs. Federal programs still stress drug law enforcement and crime prevention. The government continues to look closely at the manufacture and sale of medicines. However, the federal government is now aiming for a better balance between reducing both the demand for drugs and their supply. This is reflected in the current funding for alcohol and drug programs.

What Are Partners in the Drug Strategy Doing?

Prevention

Prevention activities include:

- anti-drug messages placed in newspapers, on radio and on television;
- training for health care workers to teach them how to recognize and help drug users;
- information for parents on how to discuss the drug problem with their children;
- programs to educate school children about the dangers of drug abuse;
- a greater role for police in drug education and prevention; and
- efforts to warn Canadians of the dangers of getting involved with drugs abroad.

Federal and provincial funds enable community groups to carry out these and other activities.

Treatment and Rehabilitation

To win the lonely personal battle against drugs, drug users must be able to get help in their local communities. The provinces and territories fund many treatment and rehabilitation programs. The federal government provides part of the money. Many referrals for these programs come from schools and workplaces.

Examples of services offered include:

- counselling services for people with drug problems and their families;
- treatment clinics;
- crisis hotlines; and
- training for people who work with problem drug users.



Coordination – but How?

Research and Information Collection

Partners in the Strategy fund research and information collection on drug-related topics. Some typical activities include:

- surveys to learn about people's use of drugs, their attitudes toward drugs, etc.;
- research into the connection between drug use and certain illnesses and accidents;
- surveys to learn how much certain groups such as women, natives, seniors and youth know about drugs;
- collecting information, from police records, on drug seizures; and
- research into the impact of drug enforcement activities.

Enforcement and Control

The federal government works with provincial, territorial and municipal enforcement agencies and the courts to reduce the supply of drugs. Efforts in the enforcement and control area include:

- reducing the flow of illegal drugs;
- seizing the profits of the drug trade; and
- helping law enforcement agencies work together.

We need to coordinate responses to Canada's drug problem. All levels of government, community and volunteer groups, addiction agencies, labour, business, law enforcement agencies and the media need a way of working together to find long-term solutions to alcohol and other drug abuse.

One way in which the federal government has tried to encourage cooperation among the partners is by establishing the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA). The Centre is an independent national agency created in 1988.

The CCSA works with the private sector, provincial addiction agencies, and many special interest groups to make it possible for all Canadians to benefit from the best prevention programs. One way of doing this is by keeping people working in the field in touch with what's happening across the country.

As part of this effort, the Centre has set up a National Clearinghouse on Substance Abuse. The clearinghouse links all major sources of alcohol and other drug information in Canada into a single computer network.

In November 1990, the federal government set up Canada's Drug Strategy Secretariat. The Secretariat coordinates activities within the federal government and with other governments, at home and abroad. The Secretariat works closely with the CCSA.



Is Canada Involved Internationally?

Many drugs used in Canada are brought here illegally by highly organized traffickers. Some traffickers are based in Canada, others abroad. It is clear that Canada, acting alone, cannot solve its drug problem. Drug abuse is a global problem. The solution demands a joint response by many nations. Canada is doing its share in international efforts to stop the drug trade. Our Strategy supports the United Nation's Global Plan of Action.



Where Do We Go from Here?

Canada's Drug Strategy is just the beginning of partnerships. Governments, the private sector, voluntary associations, community groups, individual Canadians and their families are now working together. Many new and exciting programs are in place, aimed at bringing about solutions that really work.

It will take time for the Drug Strategy to have an impact on society. It will take time to evaluate and then improve the programs. As a full-fledged partner, the federal government is committed, over the long term, to finding solutions to this complex problem.

What Role Can You Play?

Through Canada's Drug Strategy, we have taken another important and determined step toward finding long-term solutions to the problem of drug abuse. However, there is still a great deal to be done. The problem of alcohol and other drug abuse will not go away simply because governments have decided to do something about it. It is up to us. We all have a role to play. Each of us can help, perhaps as a member of the community, as a parent or through our work. Find out what your community is doing and get involved! Drug abuse is a global problem, but it requires local solutions.

**For more information about Canada's Drug Strategy,
contact:**

**Canada's Drug Strategy Secretariat
Policy, Planning and Information Branch
Health and Welfare Canada**
12th Floor, Brooke Claxton Building
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0K9

The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse
112 Kent Street, 4th Floor, Suite 480
Tower B, Place de Ville
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 5P2

If you need help with an alcohol or drug problem, contact:

Newfoundland

Contact the **Alcohol and Drug
Dependency Commission of
Newfoundland and Labrador** office
nearest you, as listed in your local
telephone directory.

Nova Scotia

Contact the **Nova Scotia Commission on
Drug Dependency** office nearest you, as
listed in your local telephone directory.

New Brunswick

Contact the **Alcoholism and Drug
Dependency Commission of New
Brunswick** office nearest you, as listed in
your local telephone directory.

Prince Edward Island

Charlottetown: **Addiction Services of PEI**
Central Administration
Tel: 368-4379

Charlottetown: **Alcohol and Drug
Problems Institute**
Tel: 368-4280

Prince County Addiction Services
(Summerside) Tel: 436-4201

Kings County Addiction Services
(Surrey) Tel: 687-2150

Queens County Addiction Services
(Charlottetown) Tel: 368-4120

Quebec

Contact the **Centre local de services
communautaires** office nearest you, as
listed in your local telephone directory.

Ontario

Addiction Research Foundation
Phone toll-free (Ontario) 1-800-387-2916
Metro Toronto 595-6111

Manitoba

Contact the **Alcoholism Foundation of
Manitoba** office nearest you, as listed in
your local telephone directory.

Saskatchewan

Contact the **Saskatchewan Alcohol and
Drug Abuse Commission** office nearest
you, as listed in your local telephone
directory; or phone toll-free:
1-800-667-7560

Alberta

Contact the **Alberta Alcohol and Drug
Abuse Commission** office nearest you,
as listed in your local telephone directory.

British Columbia

Phone the **TRYLINE**, toll-free:
1-800-663-1441

Northwest Territories

Contact your Regional Supervisor,
Department of Social Services, as listed in
the government section of your telephone
directory.

Yukon

Whitehorse: Contact **Alcohol and Drug
Services**, Department of Health and Social
Services, Yukon Territorial Government;
Tel: 667-5777;

or

Contact the **Health and Social Services**
office in your community, as listed in your
local telephone directory;

or

contact your **NNADAP** worker through
any of the Band Offices.

